

**Minutes  
Newton Planning Commission  
August 24, 2004  
Council Chambers  
City Hall**

The regular meeting of the Newton Planning Commission was held at 7:30 p.m. on August 24, 2004 in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

**Members**

**Present:** Brevard Arndt  
Kent Elliott  
Stan Gabriel  
Clinton Sigmon  
Ken Simmons  
Stan Winstead

**Members**

**Absent:** Gary Corne

**Staff**

**Present:** Glenn Pattishall, AICP Planning Director  
Alex Fulbright, AICP Planner

**Others:** None

**Chairman Arndt** called the meeting to order.

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**Item 2: Approval of Minutes July 27, 2004 Meeting**

**Chairman Arndt** asked for consideration of the minutes as presented. There being no corrections, he ruled that the minutes were approved as presented.

**Item 3: Presentation of Final Draft – Eastside Area Specific Plan**

**Mr. Arndt** opened the meeting by thanking the staff and the Planning Commission for their work on the Eastside Plan. He said it was a good plan, that the Planning Commission and staff had done a good job and felt that it was as good a product as if a consultant had done the Plan. He then recognized **Mr. Fulbright** who made a presentation on the main points of the Plan and briefly discussed major policy recommendations of the Plan, specifically under Transportation that the City accept private streets in the area that were in poor condition, that A Street be extended to the Loop from the core part of the City.

**Mr. Elliott** stated that East A Street extension should be a top priority over anything else in the thoroughfare plan in terms of transportation

**Mr. Arndt** questioned the acceptance of GoForth Road since it was partially outside the City limits. **Mr. Elliott** questioned that the Fire Department could close the street due to its inability to provide fire protection till NCDOT took over. **Mr. Pattishall** explained that property owners must play a part in the

takeover of private streets. **Mr. Arndt** said that NCDOT had standards for street acceptance. **Mr. Fulbright** explained how the City and property owners must work together to get the streets accepted.

Under Utilities, **Mr. Fulbright** stated that the major recommendation of the Plan was to monitor the capacity of sewer lines in the area so that the capacity isn't exceeded as a result of new development and that the City plan accordingly if capacity reaches at least 50%.

Under Economic Development, the Plan recommends that regulations be adopted that promote high quality for new commercial areas, that new commercial areas be justified by market analysis.

**Mr. Pattishall** explained the purpose of the market studies was to make sure there was a need for a project and that it doesn't cause displacement or abandonment of existing viable commercial areas.

Under Environment, **Mr. Fulbright** stated that the plan recommended stream buffers along all streams in the Planning area, the purpose being for improvement of water quality. He stated that exceptions would be made for extensions of greenways and sewer lines within the stream buffer areas. He stated the Plan also recommended retention of existing vegetation for new development.

**Mr. Elliott** questioned the ten percent slope limitation or prohibition for commercial industrial development and questioned why shouldn't that be allowed. **Mr. Fulbright** responded he felt it was important to focus on better sites that don't require so much grading and also to preserve the natural topography and keep the character of the area in tact. **Mr. Elliott** expressed concern that ten percent prohibition on slopes could impact economic development potential. He stated that the Planning Commission and staff did not know what could happen in 5-10 years, if people want to spend the necessary money to grade land, the City should permit them to do so.

After general discussion, there was a consensus that the ten percent slope maximum on Page #13 in the Plan be deleted.

Under Community Character, **Mr. Fulbright** stated that the Plan recommend that sidewalks be required for both sides of the street. **Mr. Elliott** and **Mr. Arndt** expressed support for requirement of sidewalks on both sides of the street. **Mr. Elliott** mentioned US 321 is an example for the need for sidewalks. **Mr. Winstead** said he supported both sides so as to give pedestrian options.

**Mr. Fulbright** further stated that under Community Character, preparation of a design manual was recommended as well as an ordinance to prohibit billboards. **Mr. Elliott** questioned allowing changing message signs. After general discussion, there was concern expressed about advertising for things that are not in Newton for these types of signs and they should be looked at.

**Mr. Fulbright** said the Plan recommended the minimization of the use of cul-de-sacs in subdivisions, the intent being to encourage connectivity. **Mr. Arndt** said that some homeowners like cul-de-sacs for privacy and to prohibit cut through traffic. **Mr. Pattishall** explained the virtues of connectivity and how it improved efficiency of services, decreased the number of trips, wear and tear on vehicles as well as decreased the amount of pollution as a result of trip reduction.

**Mr. Fulbright** reviewed the Governmental policy recommendations that the Newton portion of the East Loop be named Thornburg Drive. Under Land Use, he stated there was a proactive rezoning away from R-7A and R-20A to non-mobile home type zoning as one of the policy recommendations.

**Mr. Arndt** responded that people in the area requested these changes but that the Plan needs to be considerate of existing mobile home locations.

**Mr. Winstead** said that people make investment decisions based on the zoning of properties and that this should be considered whenever we are looking at proactive rezonings. **Mr. Fulbright** mentioned that the current ordinance allows mobile home replacement with a Class A mobile home if an existing mobile home is damaged or removed.

**Mr. Winstead** said the existing mobile home owners need assurance they can replace their homes while at the same time sitebuilt homeowners need protection for the areas around them so they have compatible development in proximity. He felt this might spur growth.

**Mr. Elliott** said that that may be the reason why development has not occurred, due to the proliferation of mobile homes in the area.

With no further discussion, the Planning Commission by consensus agreed on the following: that a meeting with affected property owners be held at 6:00 PM in the Gantt Room, City Hall on September 16, 2004 for a formal presentation of the Plan and for feedback and comment from the affected property owners, that the Plan be placed on the City's website and that copies be put at the City Library and at churches in the Planning Area, that the Planning Commission request the staff to prepare pictures and maps to explain things particularly for the new Loop under construction showing homes, apartments and industries. The Planning Commission also authorized staff to schedule a public hearing for the September 22, 2004 Planning Commission meeting.

**Item 4: Old Business**

There was none.

**Item 5: New Business**

There was none.

**Item 6: Reports**

**Mr. Pattishall** reviewed the Code Enforcement and Permit Reports for the month of July, 2004.

**Item 7: Adjournment**

With no further discussion, meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn J. Pattishall/AICP  
Secretary

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